



Shame and desistance from bullying: Findings from a three-year follow-up study

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What do we know about shame?

- Shame deters crime
- Shame is the master emotion
- Shame is what we feel when we breach a social / moral standard
- Shame, if acknowledged, serves adaptive functions
- Shame, if unacknowledged, serves non-adaptive functions

Source: Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite, 1989; Lewis, 1971; Nathanson, 1992; Retzinger, 1991; Scheff, 1987

Table 1. Adaptive and non-adaptive dimensions of shame management

Shame acknowledgment		Adaptive	Non-adaptive
1.	Admitting shame feelings	√	X
2.	Taking responsibility	√	X
3.	Making amends	√	X
Internalizing shame			
4.	Feeling others' rejection	X	√
Shame displacement			
5.	Blaming others	X	√
6.	Wanting to have retaliation	X	√
7.	Hitting out at something else	X	√

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Bullies will show **lower** scores on shame acknowledgment but **higher** scores on shame displacement

Hypothesis 2:

Non-bully/non-victims will show **higher** scores on shame acknowledgment but **lower** scores on shame displacement

Hypotheses (cont'd)

Hypothesis 3:

Victims will show **higher** scores on internalizing shame, and **lower** scores on shame displacement

Hypothesis 4:

Bully/victims will score **higher** on internalizing shame like victims, and on shame displacement like bullies

Sample (1996)

- 32 schools in the Australian Capital Territory
- Public and private
- Co-educational
- 1,401 students (and their parents; $n = 978$)
- Mean age of students = 10.87 years
- Girls = 54%

Instruments

- Management Of Shame State – Shame Acknowledgment and Shame Displacement (MOSS-SASD) (<http://www.crj.anu.edu.au>)
- Bullying questions:
 - How often have you been a part of a group that bullied someone during the last year?
 - How often have you, on your own, bullied someone during the last year?
 - Why did you bully?
- Victim questions:
 - how often (in the last year) have you been bullied by another student or group of students?
 - Why do you think you were bullied?



Table 2.

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Grouping children according to their bullying involvements

Non-bully/non-victims -	neither bullied nor were victimized
Victims -	had been victimized but had never bullied
Bullies -	had bullied but never been victimized
Bully/victims -	both bullied and were victimized

Table 3. Percentages of children involved / non-involved in bullying/victimization

	<u>No Bullying</u>	<u>Bullying</u>
<u>No Victimization</u>	Non-bully / Non-victims n = 211 (15%)	Bullies n = 179 (13%)
<u>Victimization</u>	Victims n = 293 (21%)	Bully / Victims n = 156 (11%)

Table 4. Findings in relation to shame management dimensions for four groups of children

Dimensions	NB/NV	VICTIM	BULLY	B/V	F (3, 838)
Feeling shame	✓	✓	X	✓	12.01***
Taking responsibility	✓	✓	X	X	7.08***
Making amends	✓	✓	X	X	7.11***
Internalizing shame	X	✓	X	✓	15.05***
Blaming others	X	X	✓	✓	4.89***
Retaliatory anger	X	X	✓	✓	12.37***
Displaced anger	X	X	✓	✓	7.36***

Table 5. Summary results for bullying status and shame management

Bullying Status	Shame Management Skills	Consequences
Non-bully / non-victims (15%)	ACKNOWLEDGE SHAME RESIST SHAME DISPLACEMENT	Shame <u>IS</u> discharged
Victims (21%)	ACKNOWLEDGE SHAME RESIST SHAME DISPLACEMENT INTERNALIZE SHAME	Shame <u>IS NOT</u> discharged

Table 5. Summary results for bullying status and shame management (cont'd)

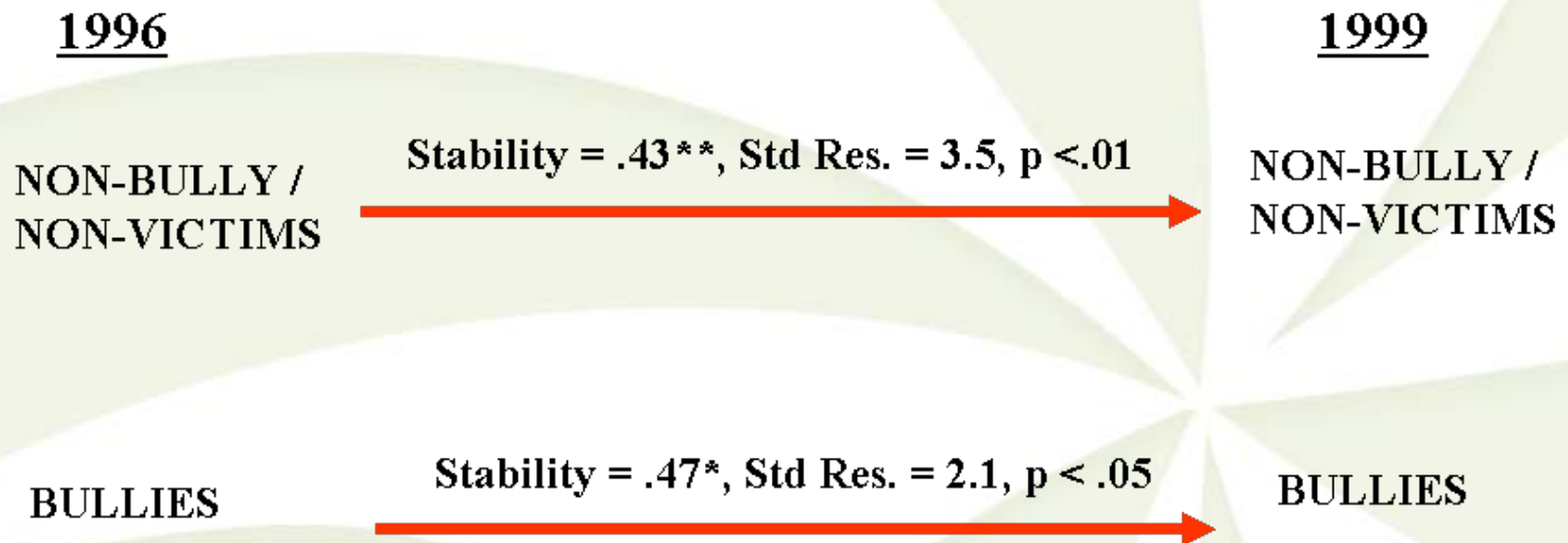
Bullying Status	Shame Management Skills	Consequences
Bullies (13%)	RESIST SHAME ACKNOWLEDGMENT	Shame <u>IS NOT</u> discharged
	DISPLACE SHAME	
Bully/victims (11%)	RESIST SHAME ACKNOWLEDGMENT	Shame <u>IS NOT</u> discharged
	INTERNALIZE SHAME	
	DISPLACE SHAME	

Table 6 . Follow-up sample (1999) and attrition rate

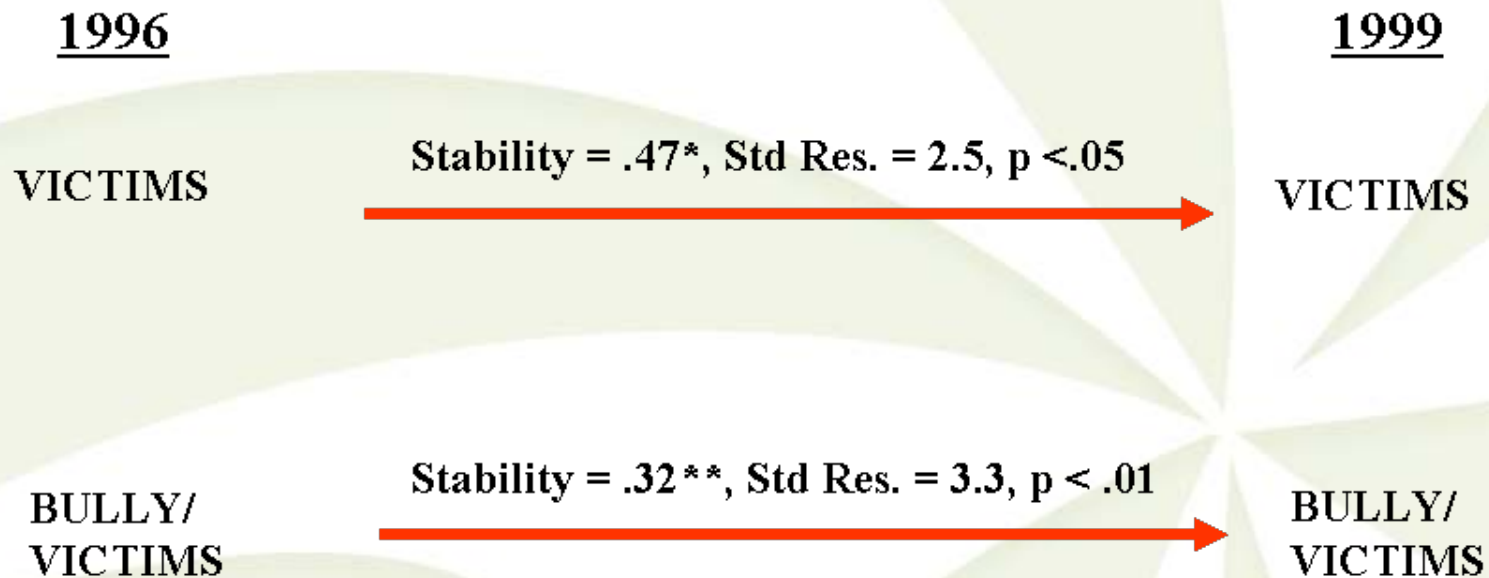
Parents participated in 1996	n = 978
Agreed to participate in the follow-up	n = 581 (59.40%)
Response rate in the follow-up (1999)	n = 368 (63.30%)
Attrition rate	36.70%

Q. How stable is a child's bullying status across time?

Stability of children's bullying status between 1996 and 1999



Stability of children's bullying status between 1996 and 1999 (cont'd)



➤ **Q. To what extent children's shame management skills relate to their bullying status over time**

1. stable non-bully/non-victims versus those who moved to the bullying group in 1999
2. stable bullies versus those who moved to the non-bully/non-victim group in 1999

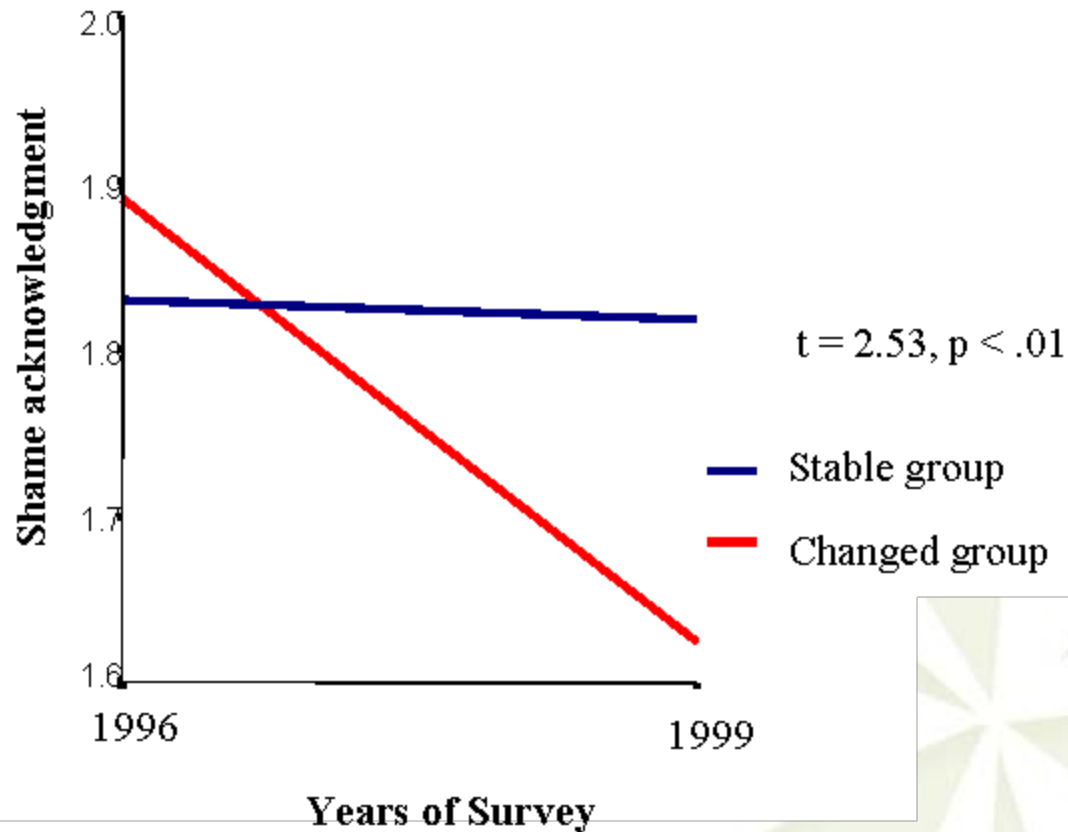


Figure 1. A comparison of Shame Acknowledgment scores (1996 and 1999) between “stable non-bully / non-victims” and those who moved to the bullying group

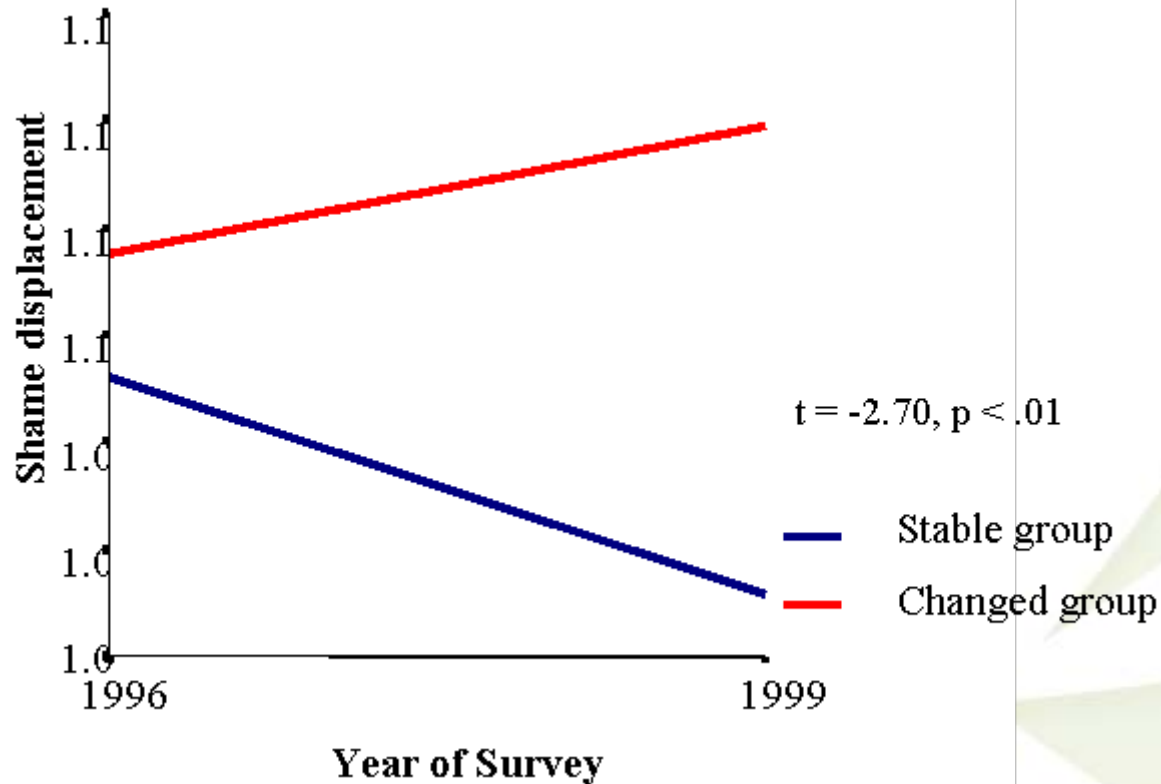


Figure 2. A comparison of Shame displacement scores (1996 and 1999) between “stable non-bully / non-victims” and those who moved to the bullying group

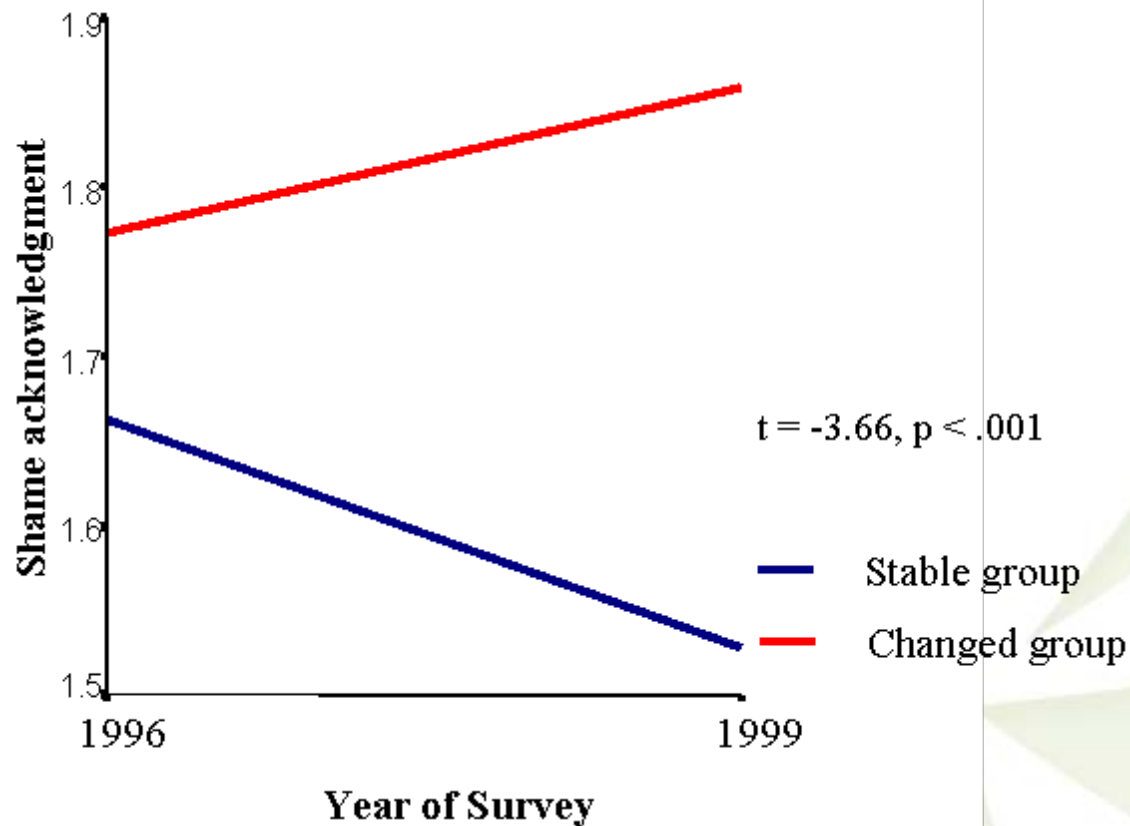


Figure 3. A comparison of Shame acknowledgment scores (1996 and 1999) between “stable bullies” and those who moved to the non-bully / non-victim group

Summary findings

- Bullying and victimization are moderately stable
- Non-bully / non-victims are the most socially and emotionally competent children because of their adaptive shame management –
 - High shame acknowledgment
 - Low internalizing shame
 - Low shame displacement
- Adaptive shame management skills deter recidivism in bullying

Figure 4. Path analysis: can adaptive shame management interrupt the careers of bullying? (chi-square = 31.09, df = 16, $p < .01$, CFI = .969, GFI = .981, RMSEA = .053)

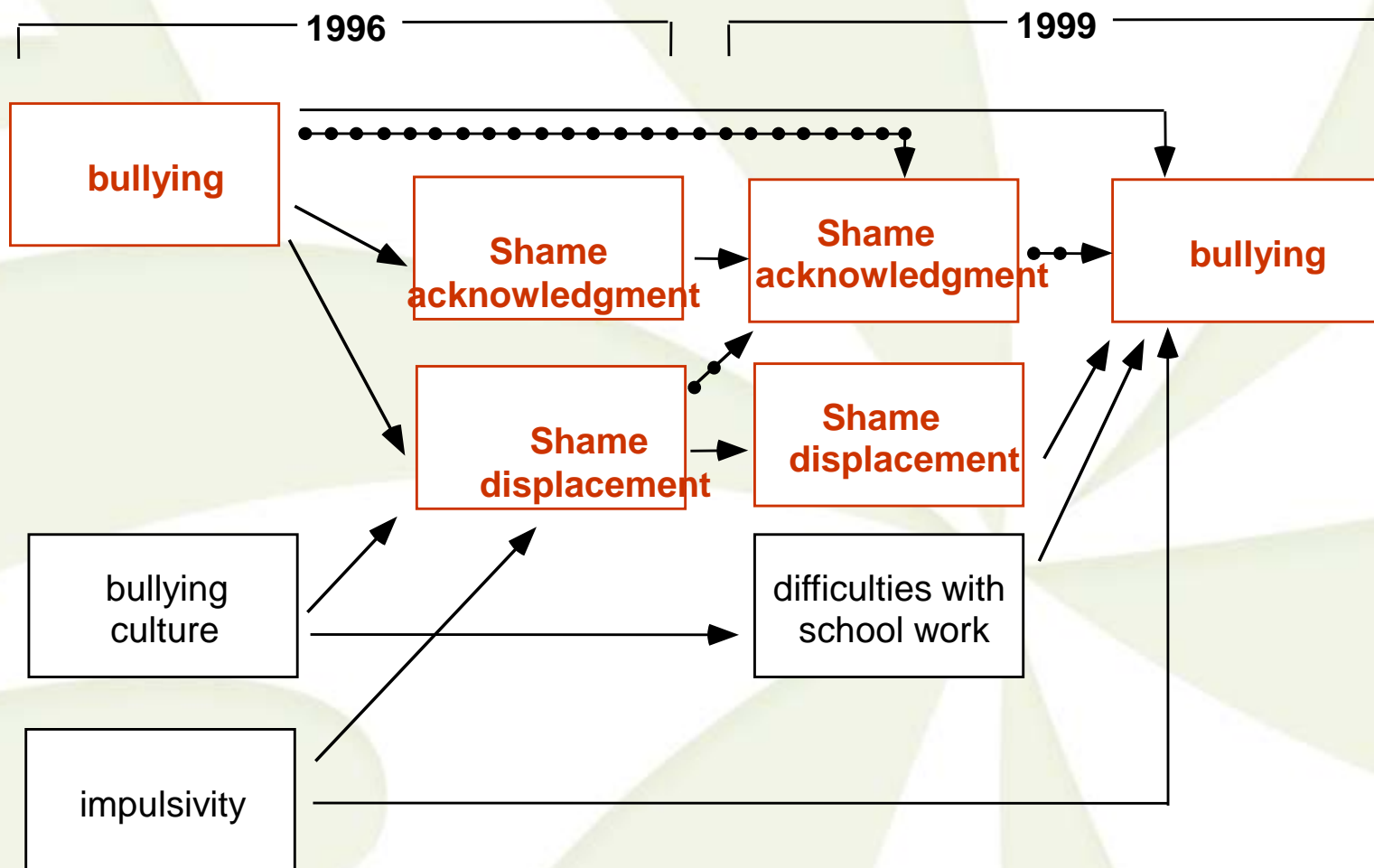


Table 7. Views (teachers and parents) on managing bullying – a responsive regulatory approach? (1999 dataset)

General framework for management of bullying	% agreeing teachers	% agreeing parents
Discussions first and then stricter enforcement of rules if the problem is not resolved	86	82
Discussions involving teachers, students and parents to sort out problems between children who bully and those who are bullied	82	80
Enforcement of strict rules that forbid bullying and disciplining guilty parties	62	72

Were victimized teachers more of a wary?

Table 8. Teachers' views on "dialogue, persuasion and education interventions"

Interventions to control bullying	% victims	% non-victims
Programs that build a sense of community in the school	88	94
Consulting with parents and children to develop guidelines for how bullying should be handled	80 (p) 87(c)	84 (p) 92 (c)
Conflict resolution classes within the school curriculum	71	71
Organized discussion groups for parents of students who bully or are bullied	70	70

Table 9. Teachers' views on "assertion of power and coercion interventions"

Interventions to control bullying	% victims high priority	% non-victims high priority
Immediate time-out for any child caught bullying	76	81
Taking away privileges from children who bully	68	70
Expulsion of children who have repeatedly been reported as bullies	40	47
Suspension for a week or two of children who have bullied other children	22	28

Teachers who had been bullied: Have their spirits been dampened?

No, experiencing bullying did not create an underclass of victim teachers. But the cultural clash between schools and bureaucracy may have produced misperceptions around:

- (a) recognition of the harm
- (b) innovation in developing whole-of-school bullying programs
- (c) building a shared culture of understanding

Source: Braithwaite, V. (manuscript in preparation)